

## BOOK REVIEW

JIM STANLEY. 2009. **Hill Country Landowner's Guide**. Louise Lindsey Merrick natural environment series, no. 44. (ISBN 978-1-603-44137-7, flexbound w/flaps). Texas A & M Press, John H. Lindsey Building, Lewis Street, 4354 TAMU, College Station, Texas 77843-4354, U.S.A. (**Orders:** www.tamupress.com, 1-800-826-8911). \$19.95, 224 pp., 40 color photos, 1 map, 5 ½" × 8 ½".

Jim Stanley is a Texas Master Naturalist specializing in native plants and land management. He has a B.S. and M.S. in chemistry from Texas Tech and a Ph.D. from Indiana University. He retired to Kerrville after a career with Union Carbide, retiring as a senior research scientist.

In *Hill Country Landowner's Guide*, Mr. Stanley has written a complete book for natives living in or newcomers arriving in the Texas Hill Country. The Hill Country is a fragile ecosystem, and Mr. Stanley has managed to inform the reader of hazards and pitfalls, as well as actions the landowner can take to recover lost diversity.

I believe the book will be helpful to anyone living in this area. Mr. Stanley's book describes how one can measure his land so you can determine how many units of cattle can graze on your land without degrading it (I learned a unit is a cow and a calf!). There are specific instructions on how to measure the amount of appropriate plants on your land so you can determine how many animals it will support. If the land won't support your menagerie, he can tell you how much hay will be necessary to support a healthy cattle population. In addition, he provides specific steps to recover over-grazed land and notes measures that can be taken to protect the diversity of plants currently growing on the land.

One of the most helpful sections of the book deals with the various domestic and exotic animals that live in this area. Cattle, deer, horses, and feral pigs eat different plant materials—grasses, twigs, saplings, and trees. Deer and feral pigs are a real problem in this area and can pretty much destroy everything except junipers, a.k.a. cedars. Mr. Stanley suggests a couple of strategies and cautions the landowner that managing the deer population is not a one time event but an ongoing activity. Photographs of damage done by feral pigs and deer were helpful. Photographs of areas protected by fencing provide encouragement that one can recover the unique ecosystem of the Hill Country when suggestions in this book are implemented and followed with perseverance and diligence.

This book should be in the library of every landowner in the Hill Country. The information is invaluable for everyone from the new arrival with a pet cow to a veteran rancher to the person trying to save their plants from browsing deer and feral pigs.—Kay Yount, Tarrant County Master Gardener, BRIT Volunteer, Fort Worth, Texas, U.S.A.